

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 COME-00 EB-08 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 TRSE-00
AGRE-00 /073 W

-----065505 122103Z /63

R 121430Z SEP 77

FM AMEMBASSY MADRID
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1681
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USMISSION NATO
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 1 OF 2 MADRID 6760

E.O.11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, PINT, SP

SUBJECT: GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF SPANISH UNION POWER

1. MANY YEARS OF FREE TRADE UNION ILLEGALITY UNDER FRANCO HAVE LEFT SPAIN WITH A LOW PERCENTAGE OF UNION MEMBERSHIP, SPLIT PRINCIPALLY FOUR MAJOR AND FOUR LESSER UNIONS. CENTRIST MADRID DAILY "INFORMACIONES" PUBLISHED ON SEPTEMBER 7 RESULTS OF RECENT RESEARCHES INTO STRENGTH OF THOSE VARIOUS UNIONS, WITH PARTICULAR ATTENTION TO THEIR RELATIVE POSITIONS IN DIFFERENT REGIONS. WE FIND THEIR FACTS AND CONCLUSIONS PERSUASIVE, AND SUMMARIZE THEM (WITH COMMENTS BELOWS).

2. THE SOCIALIST UGT UNION WAS A POOR SECOND IN SIZE TO
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THE COMMUNIST-DOMINATED SWC (WORKERS COMMISSIONS) UNTIL THIS YEAR. RECENTLY, HOWEVER, IT HAS ENJOYED EXCELLENT RECRUITING RESULTS, (GREATLY ASSISTED BY THE STRONG PARLIAMENTARY SHOWING OF ITS PSOE COMRADES IN ARMS) MEMBERSHIP CLAIMED THIS SUMMER REACHED 500,000 AND IS PROJECTED TO REACH ONE MILLION BY YEAR'S END (AN ESTIMATE WHICH STRUCK "INFORMACIONES" AS OPTIMISTIC). NEW AFFILIATIONS

ARE REPORTEDLY RUNNING ABOUT 1000 PER DAY). THE UGT SHOWS RELATIVELY UNIFORM DISTRIBUTION THROUGH THE INDUSTRIAL HEARTLAND OF BARCELONA, MADRID AND ENVIRONS, AND ASTURIAS, AS WELL AS VALENCIA. IN SPITE OF THE HEAVY SOCIALIST VOTE IN THE SOUTH. THE UGT IS QUITE WEAK IN ANDALUCIA, THOUGH IT CLAIMS TO BE MAKING PROGRESS.

3. THE COMMUNIST DOMINATED SWC WAS FORMERLY THE STRONGEST TRADE UNION, BUT THE UGT IS NOW APPARENTLY LEVEL OR EVEN AHEAD (DEPENDING ON WHOSE ESTIMATE YOU BELIEVE). NET RECRUITMENT IS REPORTEDLY RUNNING AT ABOUT 600 PER DAY. SWC SPOKESMEN CLAIMED 600,000 MEMBERS IN AGUST BUT "INFORMACIONES" ESTIMATES THAT BETWEEN 300,000 AND 400,000 WOULD BE MORE ACCURATE, PROBABLY RISING TO HALF A MILLION BEFORE JANUARY. THE SWC HAS ITS GREATEST SINGLE POWER BASE IN CATALUNYA. ESPECIALLY IN ANDALUCIA, THE BASQUE COUNTRY, MADRID, THE INDUSTRIAL POCKETS OF GALICIA, VALENCIA, ASTURAS, ZARAGOZA AND VALLADOLID/LEON.

4. THE INDEPENDENT SOCIALIST USO APPEARS TO BE THE THIRD LARGEST UNION, CLAIMING ABOUT 200,000 MEMBERS. UNLIKE THE PRECEDING, IT HAS NO TIES WITH ANY POLITICAL PARTY, ALTHOUGH A FEW USO FIGURES RAN IN THE JUNE 15 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS ON THE LISTS OF THE SMALL POPULAR SOCIALIST (PSP) PARTY. THE LACK OF POLITICAL BACKING IS HURTING RECRUITMENT, AND THE USO WILL BE LUCKY TO FINISH THE YEAR WITH 250,000. THE USO HAS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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A SMATTERING OF SUPPORT IN MOST INDUSTRIAL AREAS. AND MAY STILL BE THE LARGEST UNION IN CERTAIN PROVINCES OF THE SOUTH (ALMERIA, CADIZ, MURCIA) AND THE CANARY ISLANDS. ITS LEADERSHIP HOPES TO SPEED UP RECRUITING, ESPECIALLY IN THE MADRID AND BALEARIC REGIONS. (COMMENT: SOME LEADERS ARE MORE INCLINED TO THROW IN THE TOWEL, AND MERGER NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE UGT HAVE BEGUN, BUT ARE BITTERLY CONTROVERSIAL WITHIN THE USO AND MAY WELL FAIL, OR SPLIT THE UNION-SEE MADRID 6534).

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5. THE ANARCHO-SYMDICALIST CNT IS HEIR TO A GREAT NAME
AND LONG TRADITION FROM PRE-CIVIL WAR DAYS.
"VIRTUALLY NON-EXISTENT" AS RECENTLY AS LAST YEAR, IT HAS
REAPIDLY REBUILT STRENGTH IN ITS TRADITIONAL AREAS OF
CATALUNYA AND VALENCIA, WITH SOME SUPPORT ALSO IN MADRID. ITS
FORMER STRNGTH AMONG THE PEASANTS OF ANDALUCIA HAS APPARENTLY
DISAPPEARED. ITS AFFILIATES ARE ESTIAMTED BY "INFORMACIONES"
AT 80,000; CURRENTLY RECURITMENT IS NOT QUANTIFIABLE, BUT
APPARENTLY QUITE SUCCESSFUL. THE CNT IS THE MOST MILITANTLY
INDEPENDENT AND ANTI-GOVERNMENT (SOME WOULD SAY UNREALISTIC
AND UNREASONABLE) OF THE FOUR MAJOR UNIONS (SEE MADRID
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6598.)

6. TWO SMALLER SO-CALLED "UNITARY" UNIONS, FORMED BY FARLEFT
DISSIDENTS FROM THE SWC RANKS. ALSO OPERATE NATIONWIDE
THE GSUT (CONFEDERATION OF UNITARY SYNDICATES OF WORKERS)
IS LINKED TO THE MOST SPANISH WORKERS PARTY (PTE), AND
IS REMARKABLE AS REPORTEDLY THE ONLY UNION WITH REAL STRENGHT
AMONG THE ANADULUCIAN RURAL WORKERS (T THROUGH ITS AFFILIATE THE
SYNDICATE OF AGRICULTRUAL WORKERS), AND ALSO HAS POCKERS OF
STRNEGTH IN CATALUNYA, MALAGA, AND ALMERIA. MEMBERSHIP IS
CLAIMED AT 180,000 BUT, SAYS "INFORMACIONES", IS CERTAINLY
MUCH LESS. THE UNITARY SYNDICATE (SU) IS LINKED TO THE

REVOULATIONARY ORGANIZATION OF LABOR (ORT), ANOTHER MAOIST
SPLINTER, AND HAS ITS MAIN CENTERS IN NAVARRE, HUELVA, AND
EXTRSMADURA.

7. TWO REGIONAL UNIONS COMPLETE THE LIST, THE CATALAN SOC
(SOLIDARITY OF CATALAN WORKERS) AND THE BASQUE STV (SOLIDARITY
OF BASQUE WORKERS). AS RECENTLY AS LAST SUMMER SOC COULD
COUNT ONLY A FEW HUNDRED MEMBERS, AHOW GROWN TO A FEW THOUSAND
THE STV IS VERY MUCH DTRONGER, BUT PROBABLY STILL TOTALS
FWER TODAY THAT THE 40,000 MEMBERS REACHED UNDER THE SECOND
REPUBLIC IN THE 1930'S (ITS MEMBERS ARE OVERWHELMINGLY
ETHNIC BASQUES; THE "IMMIGRANT" SPANIARDS WHO NOW TOTAL
NEARLY HALF THE NASQUE COUNTRY POPULATION TEND TO JOIN THE
NATIONAL GROUPS)

8. COMMENT: THE GIVT BY AND LARGE ALSO CONSIDERS THESE EIGHT
UNIONS AS MOST REPRESENTATIVE OF SPANISH TRADE UNIONISM. ALL BUT
THE CNT AND THE SOC ARE NOW PARTICIAPTING IN THE CURRENT SERIES OF
GOVT
LABOR MEETINGS BEING HELD TO DISCUSS THE GOVT ECONOMIC
RECECOVERY PROGRAM. THE CNT HAS DECLINED TO PARTICIPATE; THE SMALL
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SOC GROUP HAS NOT YET BEEN INVITED. IT IS OF INTEREST
TO NOTE THAT LABOR UNDERSECRETARY AROZAMENA TOLD US
SEPTEMBER 9 (MADRID 6720) THAT "MANY HUNDREDS" OF UNIONS
HAVE SUCCESSFULLY REGOSTERED WITH THE LABOR MINISTRY SINCE
THE LEGALIZATION OF UNIONS ON MARCH 30, AND THAT 15 WERE
CONSIDERED "NATIONAL" IN SCOPE. APART FROM THE FOUR MAJOR
UNIONS MENTIONED ABOVE (I.E. UGT, SWC, USO AND CNT) WE
SUSPECT MOST OF THESE 15 SO-CALLED "NATIONAL" UNIONS ARE
IN FACT OFFSPRINGS OF THE DISMANTLED SPANISH SYNDICAL
ORGANIZATON (SSO), AND ARE CONSIDERED "YELLOW UNIONS".
THE COMING PLANT COMMITTEE ELECTIONS (DEADLINE NOVEMBER 15)
SHOULD PROVIDE THE FIRST PREVIEW OF THE TRUE TRADE UNION
STRENGTHS IN SPAIN.EATON

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Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
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